

## Information for Parents of Children at risk of Endocarditis

### What is it?

Bacterial endocarditis is a serious infection that affects the lining of the heart known as the endocardium.

The infection is caused by germs getting into the bloodstream and settling on the heart. This can cause damage and can be a life-threatening situation.

Children with some congenital heart defects are at higher risk of this infection and because of this increased risk, there are several things we advise:

- If your child experiences flu-like symptoms that last for more than a week, take them to your GP
- Ensuring your child has good dental hygiene and regular dental check ups
- Informing your doctor if your child is to undergo invasive treatments or procedures
- Ideally, your child should avoid ear or body piercing and tattoos. Be extra vigilant for signs of infection if older children have already had these done. If you are concerned that ears or skin look infected, inform your GP

Please note: Historically, antibiotics have been offered routinely as a preventative measure for patients at higher risk of endocarditis. However, there is little evidence to support this practice. If you would like to read more about this then please see the full guidelines at:

**[www.nice.org.uk/CG064](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG064)**

Please remember these are only guidelines. If you are worried about your child, please contact your GP.

### Useful Website

South Wales and South West Congenital Heart Disease Network

**<https://www.swswchd.co.uk>**

Hospital Switchboard:

**01392 411611**

Hospital Website:

**<https://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk>**

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